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AUTHOR Fisher, A. Craig
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ABSTRACT

Psychosexual personality is not exclusively a postnatal and learned phenomenon. Three biologically-based sex differences can be cited as having promoted status differentiation between males and females. These are (a) greater physical strength of males, (b) greater aggressiveness of males, and (c) child-rearing and nursing roles of females. The opposite sex may serve as the primary frame of reference for a person's self-concept. If this is so, masculinity should be defined as being unlike females, and femininity should be defined as being unlike males. Sex-role development for males is more difficult than for females. During early childhood, females have more freedom in choice of behaviors. Games and sports, however, have long been of value in aiding male sex-role development. Sports provide one area where there is no doubt about sexual differences and where biology is not obsolete. Athletics help reinforce male differentiation from females in a world where many male functions have come to resemble female functions. Games and sports are, however, becoming less sex-differentiated, and this is eroding one form of masculine identification, perhaps one of few left. We should restrict female participation to particular sports, thus leaving others to be identified as "masculine." By having developing males, particularly those exhibiting feminine characteristics, participate in these "masculine" sports, we could help them establish a masculine identity. (PB)

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SPORT AND SEX-ROLE ORIENTATION

A. Craig Fisher, Ph.D.
Ithaca College, New York

During the conceptual stages of preparing this address, a multitude of thoughts flashed through my mind about the direction of my remarks but there was one refrain that appeared and re-appeared. It goes like this:

Cannon to the right of them,
Cannon to the left of them,
Cannon in front of them
    Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
    Rode the six hundred.

The verse is from Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade and I imagine my feelings are somewhat akin to the ill-fated Light Brigade. Likewise, I also approach the fray undaunted but in the hopes and expectation of suffering fewer losses. Superficial wounds, however, are expected but it is hoped that it may be said: "He fought the good fight."

To give you some idea of what is to follow, the presentation is organized around the meaning of sex roles--definitions, standards, development; the role of sport as an agent of identification, expression, and therapy; and some comments addressed to the women's movement as it relates to sex roles and sport involvement.

It has been asserted that the normative data that we have available on males and females is culturally contaminated (Hirsch, 1974). Of course

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it is! How could one expect otherwise? The concepts of masculinity and femininity are culturally defined and they will continue to remain so. The social order is dependent upon the routine daily acting-out of the morality of people; it is a living testimony of the cultural values (Walum, n.d.). Masculinity and femininity are multidimensional concepts which encompass such personal aspects as actions, emotions, interests, and preferences. Each concept denotes the behaviors considered appropriate and essential in a given society to the personalities of males and females. The specific behaviors and their meanings are culturally-dependent.

Psychosexual personality is not exclusively a postnatal and learned phenomenon as some feminist writers would have us believe (Kaye, 1974). One might wish to take exception with this assertion since it was written by a male psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, even though the tenor of his book from which the statement was drawn is an attack on the myths of masculinity--called the Masculine Mystique.

The following statements may be more difficult to discount because they are derived from Maccoby and Jacklin (n.d.), two female psychologists who specialize in the area of sex differences. They report three biologically-based sex differences that have promoted status differentiation between men and women.

1. The greater physical strength of the male. "Males have been able to dominate females by sheer physical force. As roles became established . . . it became less and less necessary for men to beat their wives in order to keep them in submission. but the probability was always there, behind the scenes" (p. 17).

Although one may wish to claim that strength is no longer a sex-typed characteristic, Gagnon (1971) was strong in his conviction that "in the United States there still remains a large population of young men in the working class and lower economic classes for whom physical combativeness is a major source of an ongoing sense of manhood" (p. 41).

2. The greater aggressiveness of the male. "The male is more ready to use his strength in enforcing his will, and more ready to resist with force the dominance attempts of another" (p. 17).

3. The female's child-rearing and nursing.

As long as these three factors remain relevant, Maccoby and Jacklin claim that men will continue to be dominant and women submissive, regardless whether or not there is any constitutional differentiation in temperamental passivity. Although there are good biological reasons for status differences between the sexes and the role differences were not historical accidents, these are becoming less valid since roles based on sex have come to occupy a diminishing portion of one's life. However, these factors still exist and exert pressures relative to appropriate sex-role acceptance. This seems to be a more realistic position than the one taken by Ellen Gerber (1972) when she stated: "They [referring to the concepts of masculinity and femininity] ignore the fact that the basic nature of male and female does not pre-determine specific behaviors or roles for men and women."

Green (1974), in his comprehensive book on sex identity problems, listed ten factors of which one was the inhibition of boyish or rough-and-tumble play during the first years. He also discussed sex role difficulties

of females but indicated that there is not much clinical material concerning male identity in females. What material there is provides a clear picture of the etiology. One point is salient to this presentation and that is the reinforcement of rough-and-tumble play.

Ellis and Bentler (1973) suggested that the opposite sex may serve as the primary frame of reference for a person's self-concept. If this is so, masculinity would mean not being like females instead of being like males; and femininity would mean not being like males instead of being like females. Equality poses a threat in that it alters the "self-other" discrepancy. The uneasiness that many males feel in regards to the women's movement may be because their sex-role identity depends upon females being different. One of the ways of making this "self-other" precept viable would be to incorporate Margaret Mead's (1949) advice that she offered nearly three decades ago. She asserted that:

> In a great number of human societies, men's sureness of their sex role is tied up with their right, or ability, to practice some activity that women are not allowed to practice. Their maleness, in fact, has to be underwritten by preventing women from entering some field or performing some feat (pp. 159-160).

I see no reason why this advice could not be reversed for female sex role development, but perhaps there is greater reason to be concerned with the male's development of a satisfactory sex role.

Although it is perhaps risky to state unequivocally that appropriate sex-role development is more difficult for males than females, I am lead to believe that, with certain reservations, such a claim is founded. Males undergo greater discontinuity in their development. They are initially close to the mother since she is the parent who is responsible for most of the child rearing. In order to develop the appropriate

sex role, the male child must transfer his allegiance from the mother to the father. Throughout his development, the male is placed in a dichotomous position. On the one hand he is taught to be independent and reject "sissy" things, but on the other hand he is raised by a mother who may insist upon a subjugation of overt masculine behavior. Patricia Sexton (1969), in The Feminized Male, declared that the institutions that rear children often feminize the males and stunt their masculine growth. She attacks early schooling as one of these growth-retarding agents and clearly states her position relative to the potential value of sports:

> Clearly we must know more about what interests and motivates boys and about how children learn what they want to learn. In particular we need to understand the nature of games and sports so that we may apply their principles (intense group interaction, activity, purpose, clear goals, group competition, problem solving, etc.) to other types of learning . . . . Women teachers know almost nothing about boy games, and most couldn't care less (p. 56).

"Women are relatively free to become more like men in their sex-role attitudes, but men are most unfree to become more like women" (Seyfried and Henrick, 1973, p. 20). During early childhood this permissiveness operates mainly in one direction. Whereas the male child is exposed to much censure regarding inappropriate behavior, the female can choose to express a variety of behaviors without being censured.

The literature by no means wholly supports my contention concerning the greater difficulty of male sex role development. Consider Boslooper and Hayes' (1973) quote from their text, The Femininity Game:

> Masculine roles, as rigid and confining as they may be, at least allow the development of a consistent and complimentary physical and psychological identity from infancy onward. Girls are given a little more than a decade of such freedom--if that--and then, at puberty, are expected to literally split their personalities. They are permitted to be intellectually and artistically precocious as adults. But the age when boys are encouraged to become

> physically competitive and aggressive, to test their strength and physical ability, girls are asked to give up these pursuits (p. 31).

Decisions on this issue will likely be a result of one's perspective but Hartley (1959) perhaps hit upon the crux of the entire problem of sex-role confusion in her following statement:

> All sex-connected social roles share in one source of difficulty, that they are defined by forces outside the individual . . . without any necessarily appropriate reference to his particular native endowments, presenting a pattern into which he must fit himself (p. 458).

Is sex typing necessary? What benefits are derived from the adoption or internalization of the culturally-appropriate sex role? Many psychologists and psychiatrists assert that there is a relationship between faulty sex-role orientation and a variety of human ills. Dr. Karl Menninger (1942), the renowned clinical psychiatrist, in referring to various feminizing factors of masculine development, stated:

> That these devices actually do have the effect of crippling the masculinity of the boy, every psychiatrist knows from clinical experience. It is the sort of thing that has happened in childhood to men who consult us many years later because of impairments of masculinity which may show themselves in an unsatisfactory sexual life; or more commonly in various attempts to compensate for an unsatisfactory sexual life, such as alcoholism, hypochondriasis, neurotic illnesses, all kinds of marital conflict, and even actual psychoses. Call them extreme cases if you like, but they are extremes that indicate what I believe to be an increasing trend of a most malignant sort (pp. 119-120).

Kaye (1974) directs some comments at the unisex movement which favors the blurring or the elimination of societal roles on the basis of sex.

> Men may feel they failed as "men" by not emerging as champions in our competitive business world, or women may be unable to resolve their desire to be sexually expressive with their conviction that a "woman" must be passive to be feminine. Some, unable to grasp a cohesive sense of their own masculinity or

> femininity in the face of ill-defined or caricatured cultural impressions, deny any differences. And so we ogle at the abnegation of sexual roles; we titter at unisex.
>
> A current story making the rounds concerns a young couple in identical outfits and hair styles, with identical facial expressions, who enter a physician's consultation room for a premarital examination. After a few moments of bewilderment, the doctor turns to them and asks: "All right, I give up. Which one has the menstrual cycle?" "I don't know about the menstrual cycle," replies one, "but I've got a Honda."
>
> There is a pathetic quality to the tale. The confusion, the escape into ignorant oblivion, the meager identification predicated upon the possession of a "male" symbol, the motorcycle, sadly exemplify the devastation of the sexual egos of our future citizenry. There is an apparent need for a definition and reaffirmation of both masculinity and femininity in our culture (p. 45).

It is difficult for me to accept the relevance of the androgynous position in light of the above statements. Contrary to the positions of many feminist writers, sex-role standards are functionally significant. Even Sandra Bem (1973), one who vehemently attacks psychology's version of America's sex-role ideology, acknowledges that sex-typed interests enhance the male's psychological adjustment during adolescence.

Richard Green (1974), director of the Gender Identity Research Treatment Program at UCLA, in his recently published book entitled Sexual Identity Conflict in Children and Adults combines the reality of sex roles here-and-now with the what-might-be in the future.

> Feminine boys experience considerable social hardship. They are teased, ostracized, and bullied. It would be well if the difficulties experienced by those with atypical gender-role behavior could be avoided. Their extraordinary conflict might be prevented if society were to radically modify its standards so that any degree of feminine behavior in males and masculine behavior in females was fully accepted. In the early 1970's we read and hear much about a "unisex" movement--the blurring of sex roles. This ethic may be taking hold in some segments of the population, but it has not filtered into the day-to-day lives of these children. Furthermore, unless the whole of society changes dramatically during the next few years, the

> distress already experienced by these children will augment and their alienation will increase as society continues to stigmatize them. While one might prefer that society immediately change its often irrational values of what constitutes desirable gender-role behavior, realistically, there is more basis for optimism in helping a single person to change (p. 245).

Green indicated that the blurring of sex roles had not yet filtered down to the children's world. An interesting study by Ross and Ross (1972) reinforces this point. Children were given an opportunity to select a toy from several possibilities, and after a short period of time the teacher suggested another. The suggested toy was classified as sex-inappropriate in the experimenters' eyes. The males resisted and showed much anxiety with the teacher's suggestion. They made comments that implied the teacher's faculties were suddenly and temporarily impaired. Listen to some of their comments:

"Poor teacher, she must have a real bad throat."

"Teacher has too much to do today."

And my favorite:

> "Remember me? It's your old friend Charlie the Cowboy. Say, I bet she's just forgotten me and that's why she says take a necklace."

The comments of the female children were less emotionally-charged and more practically-oriented:

"It wouldn't be fun to play with."

"My brother might take it."

A number of research studies have demonstrated the use of children's preference for certain sports and games as an index of psychosexual identification, sex-role preference, and masculinity-femininity. One of the many determinants os sex-role orientation, according to Jerome Kagan (1964),

is the degree to which an individual adopts the games, and masters the skills that are traditionally encouraged for one's sex. Due to the cultural pressures and the way sport is viewed, I feel more secure in accepting Kagan's remarks as a truism for males generally.

Looking at game preferences in historical perspective, Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961) indicated that the sex differences are vanishing. Females are incorporating more traditional male items into their repertoire of sports and games, therefore, males have fewer games that differentiate them from females. As a result of the extended female role perception of certain activities, males have reduced the scope of their participation. By participating in those sports and games that the culture denotes as masculine--football, wrestling, and boxing, for example--an individual may derive a clear-cut definition of appropriate male behavior or perhaps even inappropriate female behavior. This, then, has the ability to either facilitate or detract from appropriate sex-role development of the individual who has the particular skills required by that game. The culture has foisted sex-typing on us and there is a major price to pay for deviance from the norm.

Since games and sports are becoming less sex differentiated, one of the identifying agents is being eroded. The entrance of females into traditional male activities would seem to negate the claims of Patricia Sexton (1969) concerning the value of sports and games for masculine development. She asserted that feminization in males might be avoided by pursuing a passionate interest in tough sports and a committed and disciplined style of life. It is also stated that sports give males a clear male identity and masculine heroes after whom they can model themselves. Can the

aforementioned claims be substantiated in light of the fact that there are so few sports and games that differentiate the sexes? That clear male identity referred to earlier is beclouded by feminine participation in traditional male activities. These claims could be better substantiated if certain sports were reserved for males and feminine participation in them was somehow restricted. I guess this is purposeful chauvinism and I refer you back to the comment made by Margaret Mead earlier in the presentation. This same point was made by Montemayor (1974) when he stated that the most direct way of teaching a sex-role standard is to indicate that an activity is for one sex or another.

In searching for factors that predispose masculine development, Hartley (1959) found that a great emphasis was placed on physical strength and athletic skills. In many cases, she found that this was almost all that some boys had as a factor of masculine identification. For the male who has no father; whose remaining parent-child relationship is sterile; who has no father substitute; and who is being feminized by cultural institutions; it is imperative that the masculine concept of certain sports be retained. Something as important as the masculine concept of certain sports, and yes, as important as the feminine concept of certain sports, should not be allowed to disappear. Future children, both male and female, cannot afford to be deprived of yet another factor that influences appropriate sex-role development.

Karl Bednarik (1970), the controversial Austrian sociologist, stated that the field of sport offers the <u>best</u> opportunities for projecting the male image. This is especially important since the personal interaction and feedback realized from peers is instrumental in developing

the male sex-role orientation. Myron Brenton (1966), in his book The American Male, affirmed the previous comment but in much stronger sentiments. He asserted that masculinity is really put on the line when one engages in sport. An even more extreme view is phrased by the psychiatrist, Arnold Beisser:

> In sports, male and female are placed in their historical biological roles. In sports, strength and speed do count, for they determine the winner. As in premechanized combat, women can never be more than second place in sports. They can cheer their men on, but a quick review of the record books comparing achievements in sports of men and women confirms the distinctness of the sexes here (p. 225).

It is small wonder that the American male has a strong affinity for sports. He has learned, claimed Beisser, that this "is one area where there is no doubt about sexual differences and where his biology is not obsolete. Athletics help assure his difference from women in a world where his functions have come to resemble theirs" (p. 225).

Brenda Fasteau (1973), writing in Ms. magazine concerning women in sport, reiterated some of the points made earlier about what sport means to males:

> I don't mean to suggest that sports should become for women what they have been for men: a display of aggression, a proof of toughness, and a kind of primitive communication that replaces emotional intimacy. Sweating, swearing, and grunting together as they play, men manage to create a fellowship which they find hard to sustain elsewhere. And sports provide men with yet another vehicle to test domination and preeminence (p. 57).

At the present time certain sports still fly the banner of maleness, but it seems only a matter of time until the flag will fly at half-mast. This mourning period will be observed by those individuals who realize that a very important agent of masculine identification and expression has been interred. The losers will be the males who do not have strong masculine forces impinging upon them. It was mentioned

previously that sport is all that some males have with which to identify. What is to happen to them? What does the humanistic perspective dictate in this situation? Or, does anybody really care?

To bring theory into practice, many psychiatrists and psychologists have suggested that there is a degree of security to be derived from playing boys' games. The contacts and friendships found in a group extends the participants' identification with male images. It would appear that such is the case only if the activity is viewed as being masculine in outlook. In such a situation, all of the other participants could be identified as exhibiting masculine behavior and, therefore, good models to emulate. Effeminate and low masculine males could be encouraged to participate in those sports which still have the aura of masculinity surrounding them. Similarly, I would be willing to advocate the participation in sports deemed culturally feminine for low feminine females.

What role does sport play in the therapy of inappropriate sex-role behavior? Bates and Bentler (1973) introduced their discussion of this issue as follows: "Given the importance of play and game activities in childhood, both as an expression of present gender typing and as a likely learned determinant of future role behavior, gender typing in play deserves further extension" (p. 20). Acknowledging the fact that low masculine males choose more female games and play fewer non-athletic and athletic games, they asserted that therapy must extinguish the former and reinforce the latter two.

Green's (1974) approach to therapy with low masculine males is that growing up will be a little bit easier if they can learn to do some of the male-type things. He suggests to parents that if they desire changes

they ought to stress the advantages of participation in some activities enjoyed by other boys and consistently disapprove of very feminine behavior. A firm censure is provided by such a statement: "Hey, don't run like that!" Group sessions take place in a recreation area furnished with toys and equipment chosen to facilitate boyish play.

> In these ways, through support of a masculine identity, projected criticism of common feminine traits, discouragement of grossly feminine mannerisms which typically yield social conflict and encouragement of these boys has been augmented. The boys have enjoyed the group experience (p. 261).

Green's approach is both realistic and humanistic, although there may be those who term his position chauvinistic.

Myrick (1970) reported a case study of an effeminate boy who suffered repeated ridicule from his male classmates. Children are very cruel to those classified as deviant. His female physical education teacher took him aside and individually tutored him in selected football skills. Results were quite dramatic and his play behavior changed drastically. Whereas his pre-tutoring playground play choices were 57 percent female, his post-tutoring choices were 100 percent male. His sociometric status increased dramatically.

Walum (n.d.) offered a typology of various stances which one could take on the changing attitudes of appropriate sex-role behavior. She described five outlooks: (1) the confused (uncertain as to how to react), (2) the tester (wait and see what the other's view is and behave accordingly), (3) the humanitarian (goes along with the changes), (4) the defender (wants no part of the changes), and (5) the rebel (anxious to speed change on its way). Each of us will take one or more of these stances relative to the increasing participation of women in sport. In

one respect, I assume the role of the defender if it is advocated that all of sport is to be open to both sexes. The emphasis is on all! On the other hand, I take the humanitarian view that women should have increased participation in sport. As far as I am concerned the latter point is not even debatable although I have some concerns.

Supposedly, one of the credos of modern American society is, "Do your own thing!" This has been intellectualized as marching to the beat of a different drummer. Bednarik's (1970) quote is directed at just this point:

> So if they enjoy it, by all means let women engage in politics, govern countries, climb the Himalayas, have themselves shot into space, study physics, direct industries, go in for ski jumping, race automobiles, or do anything else they choose. They will soon discover which things they can do well. I doubt, however--and this is probably the crucial point--that they are particularly happy when they are competing with men (p. 8).

This position is too androgynous for me and I share the same concern as Green (1974). "The problem is that in the real world there are certain rhythms you can march to and get by with, and others happen to give you a lot of problems" (p. 274). Would you advocate that your own children pursue any activity that catches their fancy without being concerned about the outcomes, both societal and psychological? Is that a humanistic position?

Felshin (1974) stated: "It seems that women athletes do not differ from other populations in terms of views of themselves or their own feminine roles" (p. 246). Recent data collected from male and female athletes and non-athletes refute this statement to a certain degree. A number of slides of women participating in a variety of sports were shown to the subjects and they rated each slide from 1 to 10. A rating of 1

meant that the female in the picture typified what the 'ideal female' ought to be like; a rating of 10 meant that the female in the picture was totally unrelated to what the 'ideal female' ought to be like. Male non-athletes rated the following slides [shot put, hurdles, high jump, long jump, field hockey, and running] significantly higher than the female athletes. Additionally, they provided such comments as: "too masculine," "unfeminine expression," "not a lady," "adverse aggression," and "athletic prowess is not indicative of femininity." The last slide [javelin] was rated away from the "ideal women" by all groups. The female athletes' comments are even derogatory: "no hint of femininity," "barbaric looking," "weird," "rather gross," "unappealing sport," and "doesn't care about looks, just competitive." Certainly it is evident that everyone is not liberated to view total cross-sex participation in sport as an acceptable endeavor. Additionally, the female athlete faces certain societal censures when she participates in certain sports. It would seem to me that she should be made aware of the possible repercussions of such participation.

What does the future hold? Robert Lipsyte (1975), writing in The New York Times, has an answer:

> Feminists, sneakered, helmeted, bats in hand, stand on the threshold of SportsWorld, the grotesque sanctuary that defines manhood, courage and success in America. . . .
>
> It's a long shot, but the feminist revolution in sports could mean physical liberation for everyone, children and working people, the aged, the handicapped, the poor, all afforded equal access to the pools, gyms, fields, equipment and instruction that now exists for a talented few.
>
> More likely, however, the feminist revolution in sports will mean a fresh pool of cheap, eager labor for SportsWorld--Nimble Noras out of the dollhouse to join the Hammerin' Hanks in that sweaty Oz of our dreams (p. 17).

To those of you who will still continue to advocate participation in all sports, here is what you are likely to face:

> At the outset, expect no bursts of impassioned applause, no hurrahs, bravos, or olés. Anticipate instead the grudging resistance, the silent avoidance, and the hostile gibe. Men, women, and their society have vast unconscious investments in the [male] Mystique, and might understandably be expected to stoutly defend their perceived interests. It will take patience, perspiration, and perseverance to convince them that their investment is a misplaced and losing position" (Kaye, 1974, p. 190).

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